Mellow

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Mellow

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Summary

It took Will walking into a door before he realised that it probably would be a good idea to visit Hannibal.

Notes

This is my first ever attempt at a prompt series. I probably won't make it to 10, but I will give it my best shot. Enjoy.

It took Will walking into a door before he realised that it probably would be a good idea to visit Hannibal. He didn't even have the excuse of it being a glass door, as the door had been a solid brown and to make matters worse it had been in his own home; which he should know better by now, considering how long he had lived there. Sleep hadn't been easy and reading over so many papers submitted about cases, many of which were based on cases that he had worked on, was always a downside to his career choice. The frequent mistakes and misunderstandings by his students had the voices that he tried to keep shut up in his brain all come spilling out like the breaking of a dam and all within a short period.

It was times like these that Will wished he had a teaching assistant to take some of the burden at least, but that would require him to be *social*. It had never been this bad before; probably because the last times he hadn't been in the field; hadn't had to access his 'gift', quite as often and could read them as a sequence of words closer to a math equation than a story. He no longer had that luxury and now neither was sleep.

Hannibal had sounded quite surprised, delighted even, when Will asked if Hannibal was busy and if he would be able to visit. Will chose not to look at that too closely and instead called a taxi to take him to Hannibal's house, not trusting himself to drive. Although he knew that Hannibal would be quite happy to provide his transport, he didn't want to rely on the man too much. Will wasn't even sure what to call Hannibal in any case, as despite the man being his psychiatrist, since as much as he hated to admit it and would only to himself, he did need one; the man also seemed quite keen to pursue a friendship between them. It didn't help that Will found him far too easy to confide in and too clever by half and well, Will did have a shortage of willing companions outside of the canine variety. He just wasn't sure this wasn't the type of thing that neither could nor should work, but he doubted he could convince Hannibal of that.

It didn't take long for Hannibal to answer the door, his coat missing for a change and a smile on his face. He seemed to take his coat off whenever he did any cooking and so Will could only guess that was what the man had been up to prior to his arrival.

'Greetings Will, please come in,' Hannibal said, standing aside to admit him entrance and Will smiled back, feeling more ridiculous by the minute for imposing himself on Hannibal like this. Clearly the man had better things to be doing.

'I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come…' Will started to say, but he didn't know how to continue.

'Nonsense, it is always a pleasure to see you and you have arrived just in time for dinner. Quite fortuitous actually, as I only realised after you called that I had prepared too much,' Hannibal said and while Will didn't believe him, Hannibal wasn't one to make such mistakes, but the gesture was appreciated. 'I do not, however, see your car, how did you arrive here?'

Will blinked before he realised that he had been asked a question.

'Oh, I got a taxi. I didn't trust myself behind the wheel,' Will said and he could feel Hannibal's eyes sharpen on him. It was… unnerving.

‘Come in Will,’ Hannibal repeated, though it wasn’t so much a request this time and Will complied, following Hannibal into the kitchen where he was evidently preparing their dinner. Hannibal stood behind the counter and took up where he left off, while Will sat down, not really sure what he should be doing with himself. For a few minutes neither spoke and it was just as Hannibal began to work on a sauce that he finally spoke. ‘So Will, how long has it been since you have slept?’

Rubbing a hand over his face, Will thought, or at least tried to, the scents of cooking enabling him to feel more relaxed than he had in days.

He must have taken too long in answering as Hannibal simply said, ‘ah’.

Looking up at Hannibal, Will could see what he was doing, he did it in their sessions too. Whereas other psychiatrists made themselves watch their patients to show their engagement in the discussion, Hannibal quite frequently would show himself to be distracted so that Will could pretend that they were having a normal talk; no pressure; no… *judgement*. Currently Hannibal was reaching up in the cupboards for something and returned with a glass, which he filled with water from the fridge and brought over to Will, who accepted it gratefully.

‘It’s not usually this bad,’ Will said and he wasn’t sure what he was trying to defend by saying that, or who. ‘But this time…’

‘I wouldn’t imagine it would be, or you would not have come to me,’ Hannibal said, as he returned to his cooking and Will didn’t even try to protest that. ‘What has changed do you think? You must have some idea.’

‘I do. I just don’t particularly know what to do about it,’ Will said, listening to the even thud of the knife against the cutting board and he wondered absently as to how even those cuts would be. Probably wouldn’t be off by even a part of a millimetre, Will thought. The silence continued for a while, until he once again realised that Hannibal was waiting. ‘Oh, I received some papers about a week or so ago to grade and it’s bringing up memories.’

‘Your field work wouldn’t be helping matters either, I dare say,’ Hannibal said, scraping the contents of the board into a pot and Will gave a forced laugh that grated on his ears.

‘The best part is that most of my students have the bright idea to choose to analyse cases that I have personally worked on, as though hoping that they will come out with some brilliant revelation that I haven’t thought of yet,’ Will said, and he hated how bitter he sounded.

‘You think they are trying to prove themselves to be better than yourself?’ Hannibal said and Will found himself laughing again, everything was so ridiculous.

‘Ye-no… I don’t know, probably,’ Will said.

Seeming to take pity on him, Hannibal said, ‘and I am also guessing that some of their work wasn’t entirely accurate.’

‘You could say that, though they don’t have as much to work from and I’m hardly one to stick around to answer questions,’ Will said, knowing that he really was being too harsh on

them, but how could he help it when one student posited that Garrett Jacob Hobbs was sexually attracted to his daughter. It was vulgar and he had been tempted just to give it an 'F' so that he didn't have to read any further.

'No, I guess you would not be, however, you have been inside the heads of those people and understand them far better than nearly anyone else could, and for them to give inaccurate information about those people would be akin to them trying to tell you why you behave the way you do,' Hannibal said and Will nodded.

'Exactly.'

Hannibal nodded and turned a knob on the stove top, before walking over to the light switch. A moment later the lights were dimmed and Will felt even more tension ease out of him now that the room wasn't quite so bright.

'Uncle Jack has been leading you into too many dark places as of late and while I try to be a safe harbor for you to unload some of the tension that causes, there is only so much I can do in a clinical environment, and so, If you will let me, tonight can be the first step towards remedying that,' Hannibal said and he seemed to be searching the cupboards for something and a moment later he drew out some candles and a box of matches. 'So to begin, we shall start simple, with a candle lit dinner. Food, particularly good food, is wonderful at relieving stress and bees wax candles will aid in this, as well as beneficial in reduction of tension headaches. A glass of wine at dinner won't go amiss either.'

'Um, thank you. Really though, you don't need to do all this,' Will said, feeling the need to protest against what could be argued as being a very effective attempt at seduction. Will just had never thought about Hannibal that way and now he was and… *Oh God*.

'Will, you are my patient, my colleague and my friend, I doubt you could ever ask too much of me,' Hannibal said and walked into the dining room to set up. While he waited, Will allowed his eyes to just glaze over a bit, not taking anything in and if asked he probably couldn't say exactly what it was he was looking at. A hand in front of his face was what brought his attention back and he reached up to take it, allowing Hannibal to pull him up and lead him to the dining room.

A light pressure on his shoulder guided him to his seat and he absently realised that Hannibal was taking advantage of his mellowed state to increase his tactility. Will wasn't about to complain though, it would be just too much effort at that moment and it would seem unimportant later. Dinner proceeded in silence, which Will found oddly relaxing, the presence of another person, one his mind didn't recognise as a threat seeming to lower his defences more than if he had been alone.

It was only later, as Hannibal was clearing away the dishes, that Will realised that he couldn't remember what he ate, only the repetitive motions of eating and he felt guilty at wasting what was, more than likely, an excellent meal. At his elbow again, Hannibal refilled his near empty glass, which Will couldn't remember drinking from.

'Now you stay here and drink, while I prepare you a bath,' Hannibal said and Will was really beyond protest now, though he still felt he should be, and just nodded, taking up the glass. At

this point he was probably at risk of drowning, but that didn't seem as important as it probably should have been.

Will was once again helped from his chair, when Hannibal returned and led him to a dimly lit bathroom, a hand on his elbow to guide him. He should have been paying attention to where he was going, he knew that, but then he was suddenly alone in the lavender scented bathroom and so simply decided to set his mind to the equally difficult task of unbuttoning his shirt.

The water was a bit warmer than it should have been and after decades of showers, he wasn't quite sure what a person was meant to do in a bath. Deciding that washing himself would be a good start, he still managed mild surprise at the unscented body wash he was given to use. He wasn't quite sure how good a job he did, his movements alternating between jerky to absentminded until he was at least pretty sure he had completed his task and then he just stayed in for a while longer and let his mind drift.

Fresh clothes awaited him when he got out. Flannelette pyjamas that were a tad too big, but soft and warm. They were perfect. Padding out of the bathroom, he came across Hannibal who was exiting a room a few doors down and frowned when he saw Will.

'Will, you didn't dry your hair properly, Hannibal said and waved him over. 'Come and sit on the bed in here.'

Doing as he was told, Will felt the bed, warm and inviting, sink beneath him and then Hannibal was back with a towel and very gently began to rub it over his head. Once he was done, Hannibal set the towel aside and picked up the cup that was set on the bedside table and passed it to Will.

'Now Will, here is a cup of chamomile tea, which should be cooled enough to drink now and there is a tooth brush and paste on the bedside table,' Hannibal said and picked up the towel again.

'Thanks.'

'You are very welcome,' Hannibal said and left to return the towel.

Will just stared at the tea for a while, before taking a sip; the liquid warming him in a way the bath hadn't. A dip of the bed showed Hannibal had returned, but he did not have any tea with him and seemed content to just watch Will drink. When Will was done, Hannibal took the cup from him and stood up.

'Now you go and clean your teeth and I will be back in a moment,' Hannibal said and Will wanted to say that he didn't have to, but he didn't have a chance. Standing took an unusual amount of effort and considering it was only a few of doors down, it shouldn't have taken the minute it took to locate the bathroom. Will knew he would hate himself in the morning, but right then he just didn't care. His eyes were heavy and he thought nothing of that as he climbed into bed and pulled the blankets up around him.

Hannibal did return to turn off the lights, his footsteps light as he moved to straighten the covers and turn off the lamps.

‘Goodnight Will,’ but Will was asleep.

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